

JOHN THUNE, SOUTH DAKOTA  
ROY BLUNT, MISSOURI  
TED CRUZ, TEXAS  
DEB FISCHER, NEBRASKA  
JERRY MORAN, KANSAS  
DAN SULLIVAN, ALASKA  
CORY GARDNER, COLORADO  
MARSHA BLACKBURN, TENNESSEE  
SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO, WEST VIRGINIA  
MIKE LEE, UTAH  
RON JOHNSON, WISCONSIN  
TODD YOUNG, INDIANA  
RICK SCOTT, FLORIDA

MARCA CANTWELL, WASHINGTON  
AMY KLOBUCHAR, MINNESOTA  
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL, CONNECTICUT  
BRIAN SCHATZ, HAWAII  
EDWARD MARKEY, MASSACHUSETTS  
TOM UDALL, NEW MEXICO  
GARY PETERS, MICHIGAN  
TAMMY BALDWIN, WISCONSIN  
TAMMY DUCKWORTH, ILLINOIS  
JON TESTER, MONTANA  
KYRSTEN SINEMA, ARIZONA  
JACKY ROSEN, NEVADA

# United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE,  
AND TRANSPORTATION

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6125

WEBSITE: <http://commerce.senate.gov>

188

JOHN KEAST, STAFF DIRECTOR  
DAVID STRICKLAND, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

March 6, 2020

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12th St., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

I am writing to request information from your agency on actions you are taking to address the potential spread of the novel coronavirus ("COVID-19"). Since COVID-19 was first identified in Wuhan, China last year, the virus has spread to a number of countries throughout the world, including the United States. As you know, here in the United States, the outbreak has infected several of my constituents in Washington state, resulting in tragic loss of life. Tireless workers in Washington and across the country are treating patients and working to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The spread of COVID-19 has raised understandable concerns by public health officials and the public at large about measures that can be taken to prevent the further spread of the disease. The Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") currently has 17 bureaus and offices comprised of more than 1,400 employees, some of whom are located in other cities around the country. In order to more fully understand the measures your agency is taking in response to COVID-19, I request that you provide the following information:

- 1) What guidance, messaging, or information has the FCC provided to its employees and contractors regarding precautions the FCC has taken in response to COVID-19? Please detail how that information has, or will be, disseminated to FCC employees and contractors, including:
  - a. Any policies guiding the dissemination of such information;
  - b. How and in what manner such information has been disseminated;
  - c. To whom such information has been disseminated; and
  - d. Any planned follow-up.
- 2) Have you implemented guidance from the Office of Personnel Management ("OPM"), or any applicable guidance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), the Department of State, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety

and Health Administration (“OSHA”), or any other federal agency for employers to plan and respond to COVID-19? If so, please detail how you have implemented this guidance and whether additional guidance or recommendations would be helpful in mitigating the risk of transmission among FCC employees.

- 3) Does the FCC have a pandemic response plan or other policies or protocols in place regarding preparation for, or response to, an outbreak at or near FCC facilities (including its laboratory in Columbia, Maryland, and its field offices around the country)?
  - a. If so, please provide a copy of that plan, policies, or protocols, and indicate whether the plan has been implemented for some or all of the FCC’s operations.
  - b. Has the CDC provided adequate guidance on this plan or protocol specific to COVID-19? If not, would additional guidance or standardized recommendations from the CDC or other entity on COVID-19 specific policies or practices be helpful?
  - c. If no such plan, policies, or protocols exist, is the FCC in the process of developing a pandemic response plan or policies, either generally or specific to COVID-19? If so, when is such plan expected to be completed and implemented?
- 4) I understand that on March 4, 2020, the FCC took steps to limit international or domestic travel for FCC employees. In particular, the FCC issued a Public Notice stating that it would be “suspending until further notice non-critical ... travel.” The agency also suspended “involvement in non-critical large gatherings that involve participants from across the country and/or around the world.”
  - a. What additional information has the FCC provided its employees about how this policy will be implemented?
  - b. How will the agency assess whether particular travel or a particular large gathering is “non-critical”?
- 5) Are you currently providing or encouraging COVID-19 screening for FCC employees at any of your facilities or for employees who have travelled to areas where the COVID-19 virus has been identified?
- 6) Please outline any telework or flexible leave policies that you have implemented for FCC employees in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. If existing policies have been enhanced or amended specifically in response to the COVID-19 outbreak, please detail how that information has been communicated to employees and whether those policies are currently being implemented across the FCC.
- 7) Has the FCC provided any guidance on, or have you identified any rules, regulations, or policies across the communications industries you oversee, that may require relaxation, exception, or waiver in order to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission? If you have not, do you plan to do so in the future?

The Honorable Ajit Pai  
March 6, 2020  
Page 3

Thank you in advance for your assistance with this request. I request that you provide the requested information as soon as possible and in no event later than March 13, 2020.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Maria Cantwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" and last name "Cantwell" clearly distinguishable.

MARIA CANTWELL  
Ranking Member